

Siblings' love survives fateful night

By Michael Poirier

Very few families escaped the *Titanic* intact, but Emma Schabert and her brother Philipp Mock were an exception. It was Emma's determination and love for the brother, whom she affectionately called "Boy," that helped ensure a happy ending when, in tragedy, there are few.

Emma was born to Richard and Emma Mock on May 23, 1876 in New York City. Her father, a German immigrant from Baden, was a restaurateur. Her mother, a housewife, was previously married and had a son named Henry Cook. A few years later, Philipp Edmund Mock was born on August 16, 1881. The family traveled back and forth between Europe and the United States and the children received some of their education while abroad.

It was while Emma was overseas that she met Paul Schabert at school. It was said in the papers that he came from one of the titled families in Hamburg. Supposedly, they had a romance that ended when she returned to the U.S. A few years later, she was married to Mr. Rufus Blake of Derby and Niantic, Connecticut. Her new husband was the owner of the Sterling Piano Company and 44 years her senior. The marriage only lasted a few years and ended in tragedy. Rufus suffered from Bright's disease and became housebound. One day, while alone, he shot himself in the head with a prized gun from his collection. He lived for ten days when he died from complications of septicemia and cerebral fever. The press at the time claimed it was accidental; however, it also may have been a suicide attempt due to his illness.

His will was probated in November and he left his widow \$1,500,000. Another \$95,000 went to a sister and nieces, while his four daughters received nothing. The will was relatively new and written shortly before his death.

While traveling in Europe, Emma again met up with Captain Paul Schabert, who served as an instructor during the Chinese-Japanese War, and they fell in love. Once she returned to America, he soon followed and they announced their engagement and then marriage.



Mrs. Emma Schabert (Michael A. Findlay collection)

Having graduated from Suwanee University, Philipp Mock served in the army during the Spanish-American War. Although an artist and portrait miniature painter, he earned his living as the secretary of the Sterling Company, while his brother-in-law Paul was treasurer. Travel was important in the lives of this family and they used ships such as the *Kaiser Wilhelm II*, *Kronprinz Wilhelm*, *Amerika* and *Kaiserin Auguste Victoria*, among others. They were apparently loyal to the German line due to their frequent trips overseas to Paul and Emma's second home in Hamburg.

Philipp married Emma Clark, the daughter of Charles and Lily Clark of Derby, Connecticut, sometime before 1910. Although the Schaberts had two children, Kyrill and Beatrice, their marriage began to break down. The sad decision must have come in Hamburg as Captain Schabert returned to the U.S. in January 1912 on the *George Washington*. He proceeded to Reno, Nevada, where he took up residence in a hotel and began the initial divorce proceedings.

A few months later, Emma was ready to discuss finalizing the divorce and, along with her brother, she booked passage on the maiden voyage of the *Titanic*. Taking the boat train from Paris to Cherbourg, they then boarded the tender *Nomadic* and sailed

out to await the arrival of the ship. While on board the *Nomadic*, Philipp made the acquaintance of fellow passenger Edith Rosenbaum, a fashion stylist. [Author's note: They paid £54 15s 0d for two first-class cabins. There has been speculation as to which ones they occupied. A newspaper account attributed to Emma gives her cabin number as 28. According to research done by Craig Stringer, they were on "E" deck. She does say that her cabin was on the starboard side, which on "E" deck is where the only even-numbered cabins would be. Their descriptions of the collision being strong make it more plausible that they had starboard cabins on one of the lower decks versus "C" deck. Bedroom steward Theissinger mentioned her as being one of his passengers. Since he also had Mr. Gee and the Taussig family, most likely she was on "E" deck.]

Emma and Philipp were clearly impressed with the ship. He said, "Without question [it was] the finest boat that was ever afloat," and "She was so large [that] passengers almost lost the idea they were on board ship. She was so huge that there was no rolling or pitching; she seemed to keep an even keel all the time." Letters Emma wrote on board revealed that she felt the same way about "the marvelous ship, with its wonderful restaurants, lounge and reception rooms ... our large cabin, of the fashionable well-dressed people who gathered in the hall after dinner..." The siblings touched upon a curious topic: They mused that should the *Titanic* sink, they would "die as stoics."

The voyage went smoothly, but on Sunday, the weather turned colder and it was very noticeable. Philipp said, "In spite of the fact the weather was clear, the boat was cold throughout. People sat around in the lounging rooms with their coats and furs on, and complained a good deal about the cold. This was an indication that the ship was approaching ice and people talked about the low temperature and wondered why the boat was not heated more comfortably." A woman seated near him asked "one of the stewards why the boat was so cold. And he told her that the boat was shortly 'going to be surrounded by ice.' This

indicated that the news that the boat was approaching the ice field had sifted down from the officers to the stewards.”

Dinner on Sunday night aboard the *Titanic* was well-remembered by the survivors as being extra special and it was no exception for Mock. “Dinner each night in the big saloon was a very interesting one. Dinner was served at 7 o’clock and by 8:30, the people were gathered in the big saloon, sitting around the tables or on the lounges, talking, the men smoking and everyone happy and interested. It was this way on Sunday evening, the women seeming more vivacious than usual and the men merry and contented... Later in the evening, the passengers dispersed, some going to bed and some going to the smaller lounging rooms in various parts of the ship.” Emma excused herself and went to her cabin at about 10 o’clock, while her brother stayed until just before 11 when he decided to go to bed.

The *Titanic* steamed on at a steady pace until an iceberg loomed up out of the dark horizon.

The collision was enough to send Philipp out of bed. He had been sleeping and the next thing he remembered he was “standing in the middle of the cabin floor having either been thrown from the berth or having sprung out unconsciously.” To some people, the collision was minor, but to him it was a “series of booms” that he later concluded were made by the ice tearing away the hull plating. He went out into the passageway and to his sister’s cabin. Emma had been asleep when she heard “a mighty crash which awoke me.” Her brother entered her cabin and told her that they had struck “an iceberg and that it would be well to dress and go upstairs and find out particulars.” Emma “dressed without a blouse, however, just wearing a knitted jacket and a scarf on my head.”

Philipp went back to his cabin to dress, as well. He watched as stewards told passengers along the corridor to go back to their beds,

and he said most of them did so. The duo made their way to one of the upper decks and moved forward toward the bow.

To their surprise, there was ice all along the deck and when they looked down, they could see “the people below moving their belongings upon which ice had fallen.” Philipp and Emma stood with a group of fellow passengers, noting that most thought very little about the collision and “commented on the ice, wondering where it had traveled from, and what the people would do with the things upon which it had fallen, and making remarks that are common to any such incidents... Everyone on the boat was filled with the idea that the boat was unsinkable and the thought that this accident might be serious did not enter anyone’s mind.”

Looking at the sky above, Mock thought of home. “The night was starlight bright-as-could-be above, the stars shining just as they do here on a frosty night, but [it] was very dark along the water. There was no fog and no ice to be seen. Some men who were in the lounges said that they saw the berg immediately after the collision, as the ice rushed aft past the window.”

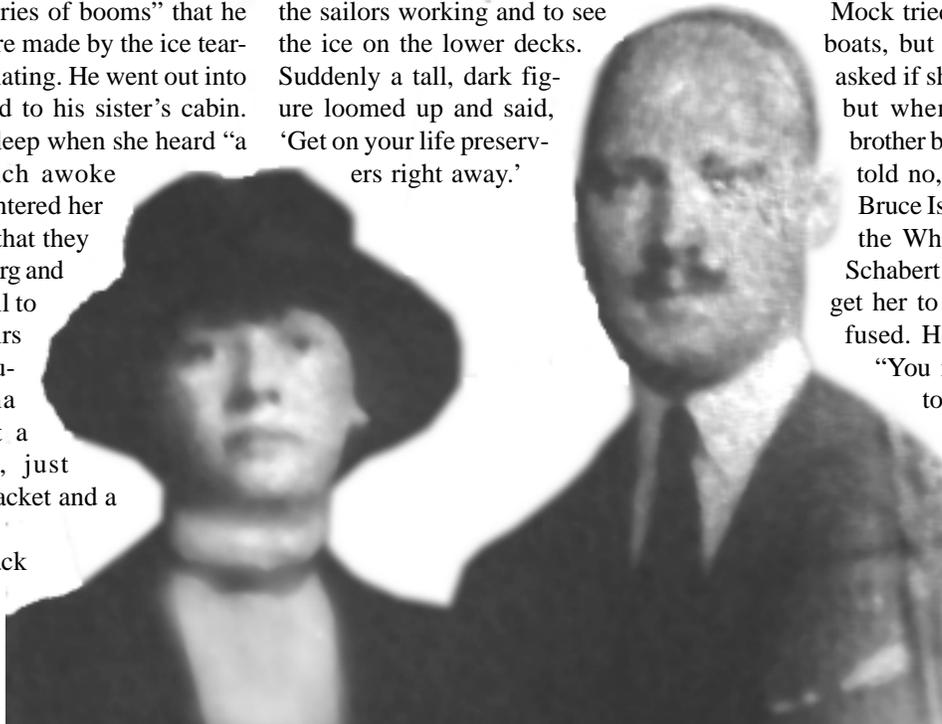
“On deck,” Mrs. Schabert recalled, “women were walking about in evening gowns, talking the matter over. We went forward quite alone in the dark, and watched the sailors working and to see the ice on the lower decks. Suddenly a tall, dark figure loomed up and said, ‘Get on your life preservers right away.’”

” According to her brother, the time was now 12:05 and it had only been 20 minutes since the ship struck the iceberg. She continued by saying, “We were quite surprised and started downstairs, where pale-looking, silent stewards were putting life preservers on passengers. Everybody was quiet and collected; it was marvelous.” The sight of people in life jackets was amusing to some whom they met. They listened to comments of the “oddity” of wearing them, but there was still a sense of security. Walking through “the drawing room,” they saw the band playing music. While back in her stateroom, she put on her fur coat, sable scarf and took most of her jewelry.

The sight on deck was not to be forgotten. The “steam began rushing out the forward exhaust with a roar,” he said. Watching the boats readied for lowering, they felt that anyone could have gotten into the first two boats. Philipp watched as “seamen made bad work of lowering the boats, not being familiar with handling them. Sometimes one end would be higher than the other, and other things that would happen to alarm those seated in the boats.” His sister found it “gruesome to see them being let down... They had to be dropped 60 feet. Boy and I resolved to stay together. As the boat was rapidly sinking, the order soon came; ‘Ladies only into the lifeboats.’”

Mock tried to get into the next few boats, but was rebuffed. An officer asked if she would get into the boat, but when she requested that her brother be allowed to come, she was told no, so she declined to go. J. Bruce Ismay, managing director of the White Star Line, spied Mrs. Schabert in the crowd and tried to get her to go to boat 3, but she refused. He turned to her and said, “You made a great mistake not to get into that boat.” A separate account by Judge Downs, a family friend,

said that Philipp had briefly left his sister to get something from his cabin when the exchange between Ismay and Emma occurred. This may have been a misunderstanding, as Emma’s next words to Ismay were, “It does not



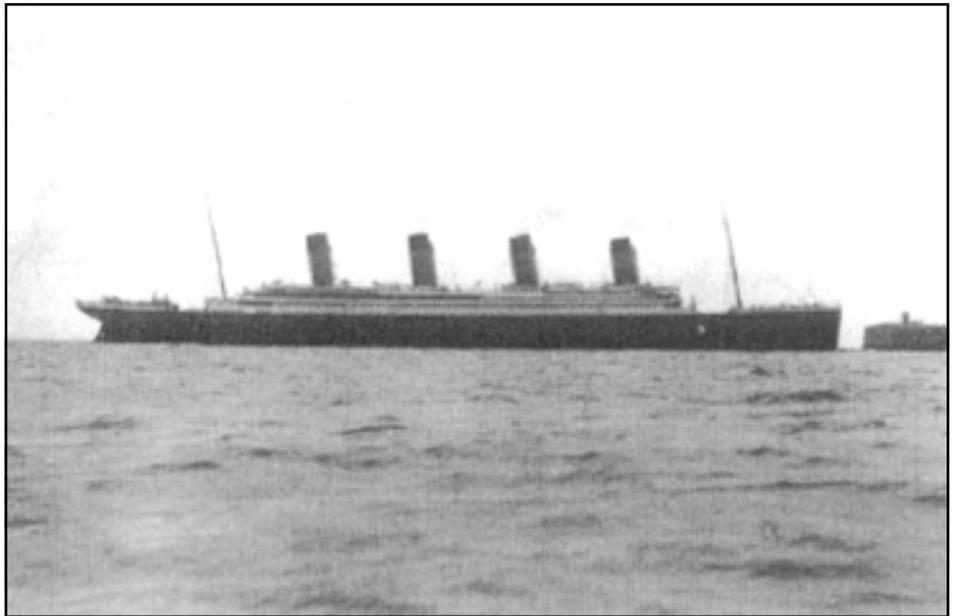
Alvis and Philipp Mock’s 1921 passport photo. (National Archives and Records Administration. Photo courtesy of and © 2002 by Charles A. Haas)

matter. I prefer staying with my brother.”

The nearly deserted boat deck made them realize that the situation was becoming more precarious. “The number of people on deck,” he said, “had pretty well thinned out. There were very few around and the brilliantly lighted place looked like a deserted ball room.” All the boats from their part of the deck had been lowered. They went aft onto the second-class deck to boat 9, but it was soon filled, even though when they first approached there were only a few men and women surrounding it. The officers were sending up distress signals “that gave off a faint green light,” Mock remembered, “and a bomb that went off with a terrific roar and exploded high in the air and made a faint light.” By these lights, he was able to see the lifeboats rowing away from the ship. His sister described the “tremendous rockets... they sounded like cannons, and looked like wonderful fireworks. But it gave us a sensation of awe.”

Moving forward toward first class, the two were stopped and told to go to the deck below. “There a boat was being loaded,” Philipp said, “There seemed to be very few people here at the time, but in two minutes there was quite a large number.” His impressions of the activity around boat 11 give a general idea of how desperation set in for people to find a boat. He and a steward assisted women into the boat by helping them climb the rail. They would climb onto his knee and into the boat. “Seventy persons were crowded into it... There were but five first-class passengers, the others being stewardesses, stewards and passengers from the other classes. One first-class passenger was found hiding under a seat of the boat and two men jumped from the deck above.” Mrs. Alice Silvey confirmed that a fellow first-class passenger was hiding under a seat, as she hurt herself when she tripped over him. She later identified him as a “gambler.” Looking at the crowd, Emma saw that “There were just a few women left on deck, so I risked it and went in.”

One of the last



Emma and Philipp Mock boarded the Titanic at Cherbourg. (Charles Haas collection)

people her brother helped aboard was ship-board acquaintance Edith Rosenbaum. She said in a late-in-life interview, “And who should I see, [but] Mr. Mock, the miniature painter. He said, ‘Hello, there’s trouble.’ I said, ‘I know.’ ‘Well,’ he said, ‘You’ll have to jump now into the lifeboat.’ I said, ‘Jump? With this thing I got on? What do you think I am? An acrobat or a monkey or something? I can’t jump in this thing!’ He said, ‘Well, you have to, my sister is in that lifeboat.’” While she stood there arguing with him, a sailor came along and, thinking the music box pig wrapped in her blanket was a baby, he grabbed it and tossed it into the lifeboat. Feeling that she must follow the music box, which she considered her lucky charm, she asked Mr. Mock to help her into the boat.

An interview she gave in 1912 confirms this story: “I had scarcely recovered from this frightful experience when one of the men hastened to my side. It happened that he was an acquaintance I had made in Cherbourg, Mr. Mock, a miniature painter. He persuaded me to enter the lifeboat, and facilitated matters by allowing me to step upon his knee, gaining the life-

boat with less difficulty than the first time. The boat was not filled, and there were no other women in sight. As it swung out on the davits and lowered to the water, Mr. Mock jumped in after me.”

Soon, the lifeboat was filled and Philipp sat himself upon the rail and looked at the sea 60 feet below. It did not occur to him that this was his last chance. Suddenly, an officer called out there was room for one more. There were no more women and, by his judgment, only six or seven more men. He claimed that a man in the boat grabbed him and said, “Come on, old man,” and pulled him into the boat. It was a relief to Emma when Philipp was allowed in. “Can you realize my joy when we were both in the lifeboat? Then we were lowered in the lifeboat jerk after jerk, and so unevenly, that we expected to be thrown into the water. But the sea was calm and we were soon rapidly rowing away from the sinking vessel to avoid the suction. She was still brilliantly lighted and looked very mighty in the starlit night.” Mock grabbed an oar as soon as the ropes holding the lifeboat to the *Titanic* were cut. There was a fear that anything near the ship would be dragged down with the suction.

The *Titanic* began sinking more rapidly. “We had been out about half an hour when the bow of the boat disappeared,” Emma recalled. It occurred to them how many people would lose their lives when the ship went down. Mock vividly described the final moments of the *Titanic*. They heard a



Edith Rosenbaum's 1916 passport photo. (National Archives and Records Administration. Photo courtesy of and © 2002 by Charles A. Haas)

loud explosion “that sounded like a big gun a long way off, followed by three others and the lights went out. A huge column of steam,” he said, “shot high into the air and mushroomed against the sky.” When speaking to another survivor aboard the *Carpathia*, he was told the ship broke in two during the time he witnessed the explosion.

“The stern rose high into the air and the tremendous craft slid rapidly into the bottomless ocean,” Emma recalled. “Then we heard explosion after explosion and dreadful cries of help in the darkness ... No one complained of any discomfort or the cold. Boy helped to row. We could discern the outlines of great icebergs and now and then the light of another lifeboat ... As we drifted hour after hour, I thought of many things, of destiny, which had fitted me to face death without fear. I did not like the idea of the icy water, but I knew it could not last long.”

Philipp finally witnessed a light that “burned steadily” and a feeling of relief came over the occupants in his boat. Once the *Carpathia* came into full view, the rowers labored for over an hour-and-a-half to row to the rescue ship. It was a long and tedious operation to unload the boats and, once aboard, Mock stood at the rail watching the “affecting” scene of people watching “eagerly” for a loved one. He said, “The women waiting and watching frequently fainted, and the groans and shrieks that came forth were heart-rending.”

Despite conditions aboard the *Carpathia*, the survivors were most appreciative. “It must be hard on the people who were going to Italy,” Emma lamented. “The ship is dreadfully crowded. We have not been out of our clothes, sleeping in the smoking room or library. Last night, a young lady let me sleep on her sofa. Everyone has been so kind. Some women had come on board in their nightgowns, and the ladies of the *Carpathia* have given up clothes and their berths to others. It is pitiful to see so many young widows weeping.” Her estranged husband sent her a wireless message, which she received while still on board, even though there was heavy traffic in the sending and receiving of messages.

The ship docked on April 18th and the bedraggled survivors made their way to waiting relatives. Philipp and Emma were greeted by their spouses and by Judge and

Mrs. Downs, who were family friends. They were taken to the Hotel Belmont, where they called various people to let them know of their survival. Apparently, reporters did get a few brief words from Mrs. Schabert, but her brother later denounced most of what was written. He said that his sister had never seen or knew Mr. and Mrs. Straus. He also said that most other things contained in the interview were “without foundation.” The two filed claims for lost possessions. His was for a modest \$1,395.50 and hers for \$4,591. She wrote home about some of her lost possessions. “I lost my bracelets, two little diamond pins and the collar of diamonds and sapphires ... I also lost my gold purse, pencil, etc. and many things I had bought in Paris ... Boy lost everything he owns.”

The disaster apparently sparked a brief reconciliation of the Schaberts. The papers reported that the divorce had been called off and that they were traveling the U.S. to get reacquainted with one another. Unfortunately, hard feelings must have resurfaced and the couple decided to get a divorce, after all. Emma received primary custody of the children. It must have been amicable, as Philipp and his ex-brother-in-law sailed on the maiden voyage of the *Imperator* in 1913. It is not known how he felt to be on the maiden voyage of another ship so soon after the *Titanic*, but the number of lifeboats, which had been lacking a year earlier, must have reassured him. His marriage, like Emma’s, also disintegrated shortly after the disaster and he was granted a divorce. He was soon engaged to be married to Alvis Ehrman. *The New York Times* reported that the wedding, which was to take place on August 22, 1914, was on hold as Philipp was having trouble leaving Germany due to the war. He finally returned to the U.S. on September 21, 1914 on the *Nieuw Amsterdam*. Following the wedding, they stayed in Connecticut while he continued to work for Sterling. Traveling remained an important part of his life, and he sailed on various liners such as the *Queen of Bermuda*, *Monarch of Bermuda*,



Alvis and Philipp Mock in a later photograph. (National Archives and Records Administration. Photo © 2002 by Charles A. Haas)

President Roosevelt, Lafayette and *Majestic*. He and his wife did not have children and they settled in New York. They then moved to Florida where he taught art at The Casements in Ormond. Philipp passed away in Daytona Beach, Florida on June 16, 1951.

Emma eventually married Baron Curt von Faber du Faur. Although he was 14 years her junior, the family apparently did not mind. The two settled in Italy but, when World War II broke out, they returned to Connecticut, where her husband lectured at Yale University. She also continued to travel on such ships as the *Augustus, Rex, Columbus* and *Europa*. Emma died in New Haven, Connecticut on April 18, 1961 and is buried in St. James Cemetery, St. James, Long Island, New York. According to her son, who was interviewed by then-TIS president Mike Findlay, she rarely talked about the *Titanic* to her family. However, she was always grateful that her brother also survived. As she looked back on the disaster, she had a horrifying thought. “If I had not insisted on staying with Boy, he would have been lost, too.”

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